

Appl. No. 09/374,502
Amdt. Dated August 28, 2003
Reply to Office Action of May 28, 2003

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 32-40 remain in the application. Claims 1-22 and 31 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 32-40 have been added. The addition of these claims and the cancellation of the original claims has resulted in 4 independent claim in excess of the original 3 independent claims filed. Therefore, a fee payment of \$336.00 under 37 CFR 1.16(b) is filed herewith. No new subject matter has been added with this amendment.

A. Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 4, 7, 10, 12, 13, 17, 18, 23, and 24 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 4, 7, 10, 12, 13, 17, 18, 23, and 24 have been replaced by claims 32-40. Independent claim 32 includes the limitations of original claim 4. Claim 33, which depends from claim 32, includes the limitations of original claim 7. Independent claim 34 includes the limitations of original claim 10. Independent claim 35 includes the limitations of original claim 12. Independent claim 36 includes the limitations of original claim 13. Claim 37, which depends from claim 36, includes the limitations of original claim 17. Independent claim 38 includes the limitations of original claim 18. Independent claim 39 includes the limitations of original claim 23. Independent claim 40 includes the limitations of original claim 24.

Therefore, claims 32-40 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

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B. 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) – Aoki - Claims 1, 2 and 31

Claims 1, 2, and 31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,923,073 issued to Aoki et al. (Office Action, page 2).

Claims 1, 2, and 31 have been canceled. Therefore, the present rejection is moot.

C. 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) – Aoki and Cleeves - Claims 3, 5, 6, and 9

Claims 3, 5, 6, and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,923,073 issued to Aoki et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,091,129 issued to Cleeves (Office Action, page 3).

Claims 3, 5, 6, and 9 have been canceled. Therefore, the present rejection is moot.

D. 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) – Aoki - Claims 8, 11, 14-16 and 19-22

Claims 8, 11, 14-16 and 19-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,923,073 issued to Aoki et al. (Office Action, pages 3-5).

Claims 8, 11, 14-16, and 19-22 have been canceled. Therefore, the present rejection is moot.

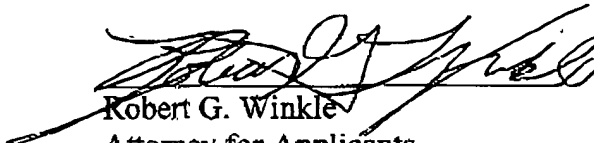
In view of the foregoing remarks, the Applicants request favorable consideration and allowance of the application.

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Please forward further communications to the address of record. If the Examiner needs to contact the below-signed attorney to further the prosecution of the application, the contact number is (208) 433-9217.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: August 28, 2003


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